

OCT 9 1989

October 5, 1989

4-1242-BGS-T001

SPILL OR INCIDENT EVALUATION

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On Oct. 4, 1989 at 1100 hours an incident was reported as in progress at Renton site. I contacted the environmental representative Yvette Barnett and was informed that a container of Mercuric Oxycyanide had been found and that the Renton Fire Dept. and Haz-Mat commander was at the scene.

On arrival I was informed by Gary Gordon of the Renton Fire Dept. that the Mercuric Oxycyanide, a Poison B, was a friction sensitive explosive which decomposes with conflagration. The site stated that there was about 20 grams of the material. The King County bomb squad will not remove any material which is not classed by Dept. of Transportation as explosive. Therefore; it was our responsibility to render the material to a form in which could safely be disposed

The only option was to chemically neutralize the material on site. The most hazardous portion of the operation would be during the removal of the lid. While the possibility of ignition was remote, it still existed and since the material is a poison due the presence of both cyanide and mercury, the Renton Fire, Boeing Environmental management and myself wished to handle the neutralization in the safest fashion. Additionally, during the neutralization small amounts of hydrogen cyanide gas would be liberated.

Two options existed: 1) Open the container outdoors and then neutralize the material inside of the 10:71 bldg. This presented a hazard to the environment in that if during the removal of the lid there were an explosion the material would be spread outside over an area of 30-100 ft. radius with downwind contamination. In addition the open container would have to be carried down the hallway to the laboratory for neutralization. 2) Open the container in an acceptable hood in the 10:71 bldg. and neutralize the material there. This would require the evacuation of the 10:71 bldg. for about 1 hour.

Renton Fire Dept., BAC Environmental Management and I preferred

the second option, since although it impacted more people, presented the smallest risk for major contamination. Eventually a consensus was reached and the second option chosen.

The container was opened by the King County bomb technician and I neutralized the material using standard chemical techniques. (The mercuric oxycyanide was nitrated then the Mercury precipitated as mercuric sulfate using sulfuric acid.) The container was found to be a 100 gram bottle. The neutralized product can be disposed of as a Waste Corrosive liquid, poisonous, n.o.s. UN 2922.

The incident was completed at about 1520 hours.

B. Gary Scherck

B. Gary Scherck BSS Envir. Affairs
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